

Lesson Classification: UNCLASSIFIED

Lesson ID: 51334-03650

Title: SUMMARY - SPECIAL PURPOSE MARINE AIR GROUND TASK FORCE
(LOS ANGELES)

Operation/Exercise Name: SPMAGTF LOS ANGELES 92 Observed: 13 May 1992

Originator: 1ST MAR DIV

POC: COL HUMBLE, G-3 Commercial: (619)725-5820 DSN: 3655622

5. (U) GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

On Wednesday afternoon 29 April, shortly after four Los Angeles police officers were acquitted in the much publicized Rodney King beating case, large scale rioting broke out in South-Central Los Angeles. Rioting, looting, and arson escalated and spread into the surrounding incorporated cities in Los Angeles County. On 30 April the city of Los Angeles imposed a dusk to dawn curfew and "called-up" the National Guard. By days end, the National Guard began to deploy into the streets launching an effort to restore order in Los Angeles. Early Friday morning the President ordered the federalization of the National Guard, & committed 1500 Marines, 3000 soldiers, and 1000 riot-trained federal officers to retake the city's embattled streets. Later Friday, Special Purpose MAGTF LA deployed to South-Central Los Angeles to provide civil disturbance support to local law enforcement agencies (LEAs). Following consolidation at Marine Air Station (MCAS) Tustin, on Saturday morning unit leaders began to conduct liaison with local LEAs as part of their leader's reconnaissance into SPMAGTF LA's Area of Operations (AO).

1st Marines' Command Element and 3d Battalion, 1st Marines deployed into the city of Compton while 1st Light Armored Infantry (LAI) Battalion deployed into the city of Long Beach in order to conduct a "relief in place" of the 40th Infantry Division (National Guard). Initial missions consisted of providing 24 hour security at shopping areas and town centers while increasing the military presence throughout the AO. Static posts and roving patrols were used to increase the sense of security in the communities. 1st Marines initiated a ride along program with the Compton Police Department to more quickly acquaint their Marines with the new urban surroundings. This program paid off for the Compton police on Sunday, 3 May, when two officers reported to a domestic dispute at an apartment complex. Upon arrival the officers were shot through the door and wounded. Marines provided effective covering fire while the wounded officers were evacuated and the suspect was apprehended.

With the lifting of the curfew in the MARFOR AO on Monday, 4 May, the military presence was reduced significantly. Visible static patrols on street corners and shopping malls transitioned to roving patrols and security patrols operating after dark. After five days in the AO 1st LAI began to return to assembly areas at Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Tustin. The next day, 1st Marines followed suit and SPMAGTF LA

consolidated at MCAS Tustin on 7 May. Throughout its employment, the SPMAGTF LA successfully accomplished 18 formal JTF missions, each encompassing several subordinate missions or posts. After two days of political discussions SPMAGTF LA repositioned to Camp Pendleton on 9 May and remained on a three hour recall until 15 May when JTF LA was deactivated.

6. (U) DATES:

0630 1 May - 1st Alert

1330 1 May - Deployment of units

1100 2 May - 1st Mission (JTF Msn 2)

2300 3 May - Compton shooting (see timeline)

1000 7 May - Cessation of active missions

1230 7 May - SP MAGTF LA in AAs at MCAS Tustin

1230 9 May - Redeployment to Camp Pendleton

0800 15 May - Dissolution of SP MAGTF LA

7. (U) LOCATION OF OPERATIONS:

South-Central Los Angeles

SP MAGTF CE - MCAS Tustin

1st Marines AO - Compton

1st Lai Bn AO - Long Beach

8. (U) LOCATION OF PERSONNEL:

SP MAGTF LA HQ - MCAS Tustin

CSSD-11 - MCAS Tustin

ACE - MCAS Tustin

1st Marines CE - Compton Ramada Inn

3d Bn, 1st Marines - Compton National Guard Armory

1st LAI Bn - Long Beach Police Department

9. (U) OBJECTIVES:

1) Rapidly deploy Division units to assembly areas at MCAS Tustin to provide the JTF Commander forces with which to support local LEAs in restoring law and order in the South-Central Los Angeles area.

2) With the minimum force necessary, rapidly restore order and generate a sense of security within the assigned AO.

3) Safely retrograde forces to Camp Pendleton.

10. (U) LIMITATIONS:

NONE

11. (U) MAJOR PARTICIPANTS:

I MEF

7th ID (L)

1st Marine Division
1st FSSG
3d Marine Aircraft Wing (MAW)
40th ID National Guard
Local Police Departments

12. (U) COMMANDERS COMMENTS: This 9 day deployment of 1,514 Marines and Sailors was accomplished efficiently without casualties or incident. The LA Special Purpose MAGTF was assigned operation areas in Compton and Long Beach which both suffered from the extensive civil disorder. We were welcomed with open arms gratitude by the Long Beach and Compton Police Departments. Our mission of visible presence in threatened commercial business areas and support for the local police was accomplished effectively in that no fires or riots occurred within the assigned area of operations during our deployment. Our Marines were close to several exchanges of small arms fire and expended 53 rounds of 5.56mm from their M-16 rifles as suppressive fire without inflicting bodily harm. Being tactically deployed on American streets was a sobering experience. Our MAGTF organization, particularly good comms and helicopters, as well as the strong discipline of our Marines found us readily adaptable and efficient in the accomplishment of our challenging mission.

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